

Preface to the Record of Rinzai Esho Zenji

On top of Mount Obaku he met the painful stick.
On Taigu's ribs he could use his fist.
"Garrulous grandmother!" "Bed-wetting little devil!"
"This lunatic twice pulling the tiger's whiskers!"
In a rocky gorge he planted pines, a landmark for later generations.
He dug the ground with his mattock; the others were nearly buried alive.
Having approved the youngster, Obaku slapped himself right on the mouth.
On leaving, Rinzai wanted to burn the arm-rest; he will sit upon the tongues of everyone.
If he didn't go to Kanan, he'd return to Kahoku.
His temple overlooked the old ferry landing—he carried travelers across the stream.
He guarded the vital fording-place like an escarpment ten thousand spans high.
Snatching away the man or the surroundings, he shaped and fashioned superlative students.
With his Three States and Three Fundamentals, he forged and tempered black-robed monks.
He's always at home, yet forever on the way.
The true man without rank went in and out the face.
The monks of the two halls gave equal shouts, but guest and host were obvious.
Illumination and action are simultaneous, fundamentally without front or back.
A mirror confronting a form, an empty valley echoing a sound.
Marvelously responding in any direction, he left not a trace behind.
Tucking up his robe, he journeyed southward, then went to stay in Daimei.
Kōke took him as his teacher and attended him in the Eastern Hall.
Still using the copper pitcher and iron bowl, he closed his room and stopped his words.
As the pines grew old and the clouds idled, he found boundless contentment within himself.
He had not long sat facing the wall when the secret transmission neared its end.
To whom was the True Dharma transmitted? It was extinguished upon reaching the blind ass!
Old En of Engaku has now undertaken to circulate this text.
It has been examined and corrected, therefore it contains no error or confusion.
There is still one more shout coming; it needs further consideration: Zen students who have the eye to see, I entreat you not to exploit this text.

Preface respectfully composed on the day of the mid-autumn festival, the year Senna of Koshi era.